

ON
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ROAD





In the pits / The Higgins sunglasses

Photos: Jeff Kardas

Photo: Dimitri Coste

JUSTIN
BOGLE



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GEICO Honda's Justin Bogle races with the new Accuri In&Out goggle and wears the Higgins sunglasses off the track.

On track / The Accuri In&Out

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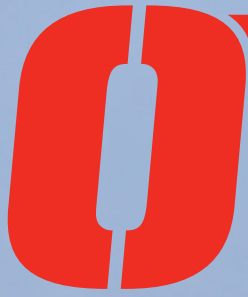
The definitive leader in AMA off-road competition: Ryan Villopoto wrapped up a fourth straight supercross crown in the well-received return for the Monster Energy indoor series to New York last weekend. The MetLife Stadium resounded to the sound of four-strokes for the first time and was the site of Villopoto's 71st career success and third in a row this year

Photo by Ray Archer



AMA-MX





MotoGP

Training ride...

Another clear track for the world champion on the Repsol Honda in MotoGP's first visit to Argentina in 15 years. The first time the FIM World Championship went to the country was in 1961, which was also the first non-European Grand Prix. Marquez's hat-trick in 2014 so far brought his win tally to nine from just twenty starts in the MotoGP category

Photo by Honda pro Images/Northcott









First timer...

Even an FIM World Champion with an impeccable record like Tony Cairoli can still go about setting 'firsts'. The Sicilian's victory in Bulgaria for round five of the 2014 series represented his maiden success in the premier class and first at the impressive facility since MX2 spoils back in 2007. Seems like the fifth title defence is going to plan so far

Photo by Ray Archer



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Airfit Body Protector





AMA-SX

EAST RUTHERFORD N.J.

METLIFE STADIUM · APRIL 27th · Rnd 16 of 17

450SX winner: Ryan Villopoto, Kawasaki

250SX East Coast winner: Justin Bogle, Honda



PLAY

LIKING THEM APPLES

By Steve Matthes, photos by Simon Cudby

AMA-SX NYC



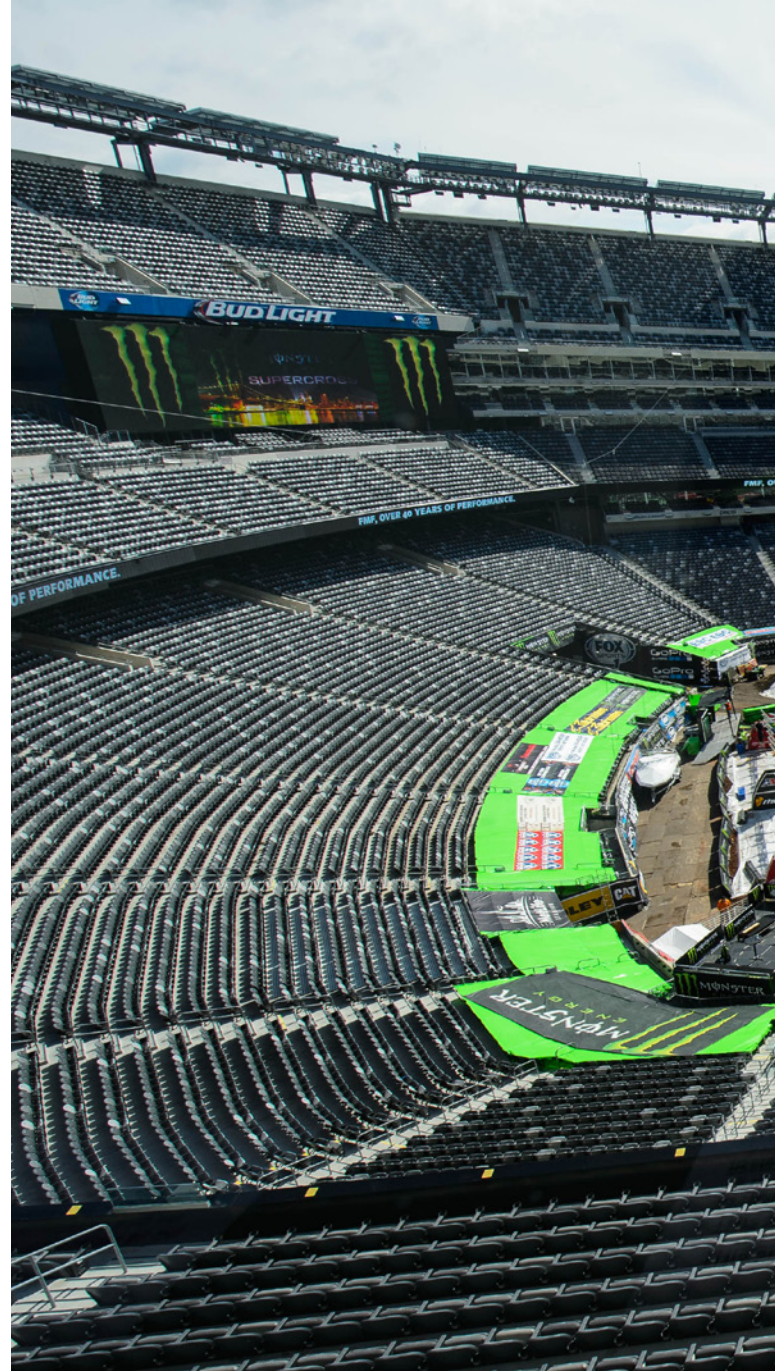
A 2014 supercross series that came in like a lion with so many great riders, past champions and intriguing subplots is going out like a lamb. Round 16 of 17 took place in a brand new city and a new venue. Sure supercross had been to New York before in the late 80's, early 90's (the stadium is located in New Jersey but it's because of the proximity to New York City that the stadium itself is even there) but now it was back and pushed big by the promoters.

This new race was a weird one for media folks and riders as to what to call it: the NYC Supercross? The New Jersey Supercross (even though the two football teams that play there are called the New York Giants and Jets)...the promoters themselves called it 'Met Life' Supercross after the insurance company that has naming rights on the stadium and 'East Rutherford' Supercross which is the actual town that the stadium is located in. Confused?

Me, myself, I'm just going with New York Supercross OK? Anyways, we saw a very rare 'blood' moon last week and I'm not so sure what was more amazing that sight or the fact that seemingly every top rider (including injured stars Chad Reed and Adam Cianciarulo) showed up days before the race to pound the pavement and do some PR. The northeast of the United States has endured without a supercross for a long time so the crowd was strong despite some spotty weather. This race was, without a doubt, a success on many levels and it's already been announced that it is coming back for next year and beyond.

The 450SX class has been decided for a while with Monster Energy Kawasaki's Ryan Villopoto proving once again that he's week-in and week-out the best rider in the series. There was a point six weeks ago where Yoshimura Suzuki's James Stewart ripped off three straight wins and even though Villopoto still had a nice lead in the points the fact that he was getting beat was not sitting well with him. Each race that the number 7 Suzuki rider stood on top of the podium it seemed that Ryan's post-race interviews were getting more and more tense.

Villopoto's inevitable repost on the track was swift and decisive as he took the next three wins in convincing style, including this past weekend in New York. Stewart, like Villopoto at Toronto, was ill at the first race of this streak (Houston) and was powerless to watch the champ get his groove back that week in



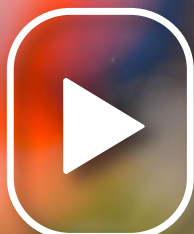
SX back in the Big Apple for the first time since the early 1990s. A patient crowd quickly filled these seats after getting their autographs

AMA-SX NYC



AMA-SX NYC

A second win for Bogle as the East Coast title seems to be passed around like a poisoned chalice. Bogle is champion in all but mathematics. James Stewart (below) sees another supercross campaign closing with a trip to the doctor while Eli Tomac (right) takes a second piece of silverware in a difficult rookie 450 term



PLAY



Texas. Then came Seattle and in front of his hometown fans, Ryan laid the smack-down on a frustrated Stewart. This past week in NYC, Villopoto crushed his heat race and it seemed that - on a track that was getting softer by the minute - he was bringing the noise this week. All Ryan had to do to clinch his fourth straight Monster Energy Supercross crown was take 18th position if Stewart won. But that was never going to happen. Not with this guy.

So for all intents and purposes, once the red plated number 1 Kawasaki crossed the chalk line to get the official holeshot in New York the story was written. Villopoto was not to be touched on this night and twenty laps later he was grasping again the number one plate for the fourth straight year, a sixth win out of seventeen races and the keys to a new Toyota truck courtesy of a three race 'series inside the series' (Villopoto told me after the race he was more happy about the truck than the title at that moment. I think with the SX title basically being clinched for a while, he came into NY one point behind Stewart for the truck and that was a motivation for him. Another mission accomplished it seems) and a stamp on his legacy alongside Jeremy McGrath as the only riders to ever win four supercross titles in a row.

Rounding out the podium was a couple of unfamiliar faces as GEICO Honda's Eli Tomac grabbed his second rostrum finish of the year and career-best 450SX result and RCH Suzuki's Josh Hill rode a fine race to finish third which is a nice comeback from almost being out of the sport due to injuries suffered while attempting a backflip in 2009.

The KTM duo of Ryan Dungey and Kenny Roczen were in a great battle with Honda's Justin Barcia for most of the main event with Dungey holding fourth for the most part before getting eaten up by both riders. Barcia would eventually break away from the orange crew and set some blistering laps to gain on Hill but run out of time and take a fourth.

There was a major shocker in the eastern 250SX series when the points leader, Martin Davalos of the Pro Circuit team, crashed while practicing and suffered some badly broken bones in his feet.

It was truly a heartbreaking occurrence for the veteran as he was looking very good for his first career title. The flip side of the ugliness of the sport was that the rider eight points back, GEICO Honda's Justin Bogle, just needed to play it safe and he would be the new first-time champion.

Bogle's had a bit of a strange career as he was highly touted coming out of amateurs but injuries, some crashes and some lack of maturity seemed to indicate he would never be able to figure it out. And a bad crash before the west coast 250 series (which he was scheduled to ride) seemed to knock him out for the entire supercross campaign. In fact the team was so sure he was out they hired a replacement rider for him on the east coast and moved Zach Osborne to the west. Sadly it seemed Bogle would never get a chance for redemption at supercross. Some hard work on his part eventually got him on the bike sooner than a lot of people thought and he started the series getting a couple of podiums. His career best of third place was shattered with his first win in Toronto and his second career win came in style this past weekend. When all he needed to do was collect his nine points to pass Davalos, Bogle caught and overtook his teammate Matt Bisceglia early in the main event he celebrated an unexpected title in style.

With one round left in supercross there's no doubt that injuries to Chad Reed, Stewart, Dean Wilson, Adam Cianciarulo, Blake Baggett and Davalos affected all three of the title chases but that's what this supercross game is about. Sometimes just staying in it until the bitter end, no matter how hard, is all that is needed. Just ask Justin Bogle.

A battle of the KTMs between Dungey and Roczen. It could still be one of their last in supercross as team-mates. Barcia busted the party to score yet another fourth place; his tenth top five finish of 2014



AMA-SX NYC



PLAY





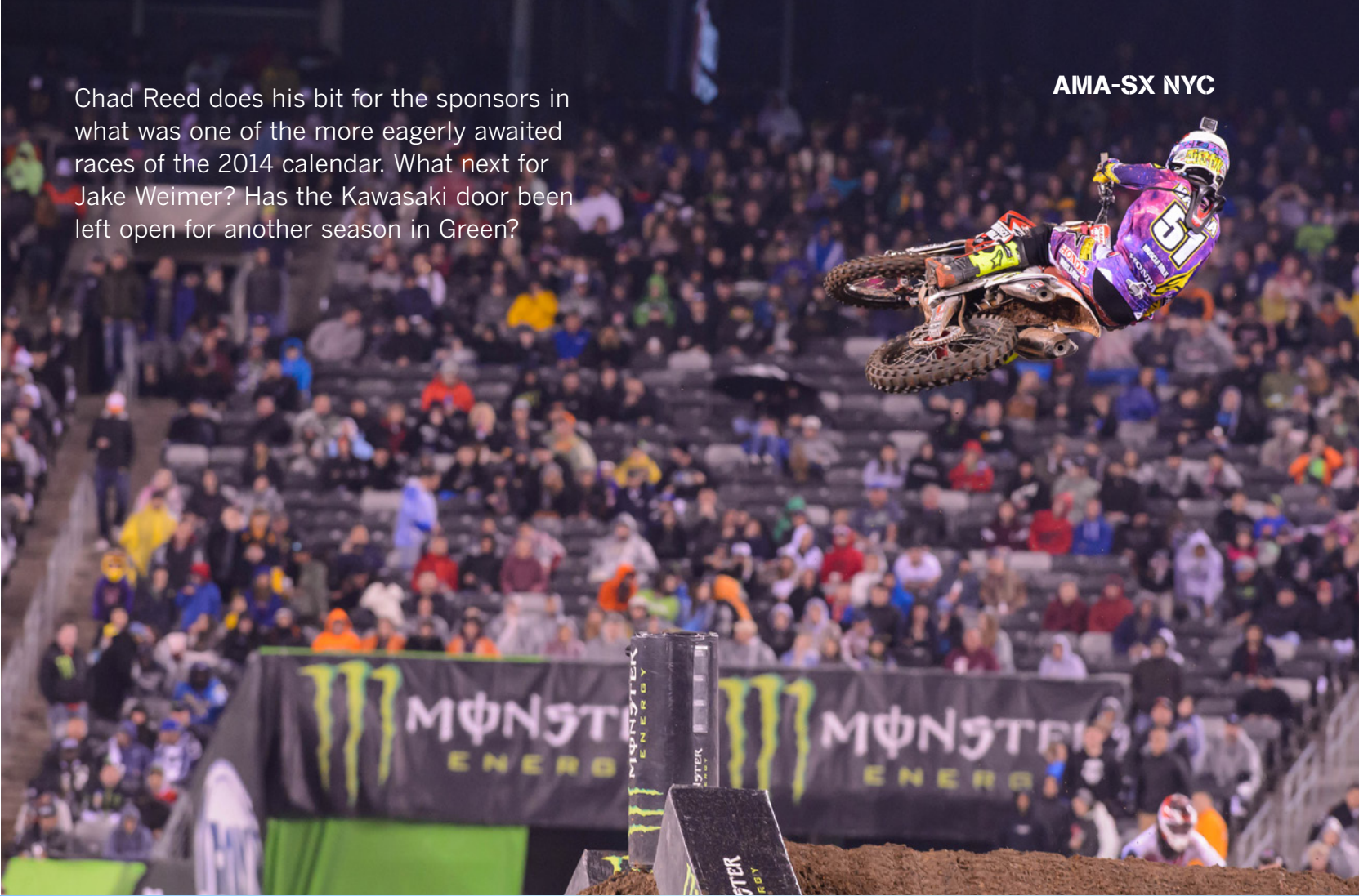
AMA-SX NYC

Josh Hill pops up for a random but deserved podium finish while Trey Canard won a Heat race but crashed twice in the Main and just made the top ten



AMA-SX NYC

Chad Reed does his bit for the sponsors in what was one of the more eagerly awaited races of the 2014 calendar. What next for Jake Weimer? Has the Kawasaki door been left open for another season in Green?



Andrew Short's 2014 campaign has been a thorough example of consistency through a multitude of states, tracks and conditions. He was eighth at East Rutherford and is close to confirming sixth in the standings as the first classified non-works rider



AMA-SX CLASSIFICATION & CHAMPIONSHIP

AMA 450SX RESULT		
Riders		
1	Ryan Villopoto, USA	Kawasaki
2	Eli Tomac, USA	Honda
3	Josh Hill, USA	Suzuki
4	Justin Barcia, USA	Honda
5	Ken Roczen, GER	KTM

AMA 450SX STANDINGS (AFTER 16 OF 17 ROUNDS)		
Riders		Points
1	Ryan Villopoto	343
2	Ryan Dungey	282
3	James Stewart	271
4	Ken Roczen	265
5	Justin Barcia	232

AMA 250SX EAST RESULT		
Riders		
1	Justin Bogle, USA	Honda
2	Jeremy Martin, USA	Yamaha
3	Vince Friesse, USA	Honda
4	Matt Bisceglia, USA	Honda
5	Matt Lemoine, USA	Kawasaki

AMA 250SX EAST STANDINGS (AFTER 8 OF 9 ROUNDS)		
Riders		Points
1	Justin Bogle	166
2	Martin Davalos	149
3	Adam Cianciarulo	120
4	Blake Baggett	120
5	Vince Friesse	120



A short week for James Stewart and his knee injury before Las Vegas where he will need to outpoint Ryan Dungey by 11 to grab second place overall for 2014

D

FEATURE

AMA-SX NYC

RV

**STEVE MATTHES GETS A QUICK SIT-DOWN
WITH THE 'NEW' CHAMPION IN NEW YORK**



The beverages were being consumed, the pizza had been ordered and the Monster Energy Kawasaki crew were kicking back and celebrating their fourth straight supercross title. All courtesy of their incredible rider Ryan Villopoto.

With the temperatures dropping as the clock struck midnight, Villopoto sat in the team's lounge and reflected on the night and season in general. The other media members were long gone, this was the last interview for him on the night and he let me in on his thoughts on the season and crown renewal.

Great job...

Couldn't ask for a better night, with the qualifier getting the holeshot there and the win and now with the main event with the holeshot and win and the truck.

Yeah good job on winning that truck [Toyota prize]. You started by the box on the heat race so you're finally starting to maybe pay attention to me?

No, actually not, because the box was open for the main. I had first gate pick and I didn't go there.

But you started on the box in the heat race.

Yeah in the heat race but not in the main.

Why not?

Out in front of the gate wasn't that good.

Why'd you go by the box in the heat?

Because that was the best gate for me.

So maybe you're learning a little bit. It wasn't a bad practice for you by any means, but...

You know I'd prefer one practice, or two shorter ones, just because I learn the track quick and get it down and some guys take a little bit longer, but that's the way it is. We have three practices.

How was the track out there?

Actually the dirt held the water really well. Also with the magic Dirt Wurx put on it, it really couldn't have been any better with the amount of rain. It wasn't like we had a lot but still, any rain with clay on a Supercross track makes it tough, but it was actually really good.

And you got through the lappers pretty good. I didn't see any close calls at all. It was a really, really good night of racing.

We got the holeshot and made the night easy. Not really any close calls, no. Everything was pretty under control.

So you won your fourth Supercross title in a row, tying Jeremy McGrath, he's the only guy to ever do that. How does that feel?

It feels pretty good but I guess it's sad to say that at this point in time that I'm kind of pumped that I was able to win a truck. At this point, that's more exciting. I've never won a truck before, so it's cool to have Toyota involved in the sport and being able to do that. That makes it pretty cool, to have that.

I bet they were sweating thinking you were going to pull the Monster Cup thing where you told them you would trade it in on a Ford Raptor!

I'm a Ford guy. Hang on, I'm not a Ford guy; I love my Ford Raptor. Toyota doesn't sponsor me, so if you are listening, I am open for a sponsorship. But other than that, if I spend my own money I would spend it on that. That doesn't mean I don't like Toyotas. I drove Toyotas for four years, so I like their trucks. But this point in time the Raptor is kind of the truck of choice. But maybe it'll change my mind once I drive the Tundra off the lot.

Have you felt some pressure trying to get this thing done and trying to make it happen? Each and every week, has it been sort of fine? How's the pressure been on you to clinch this thing?

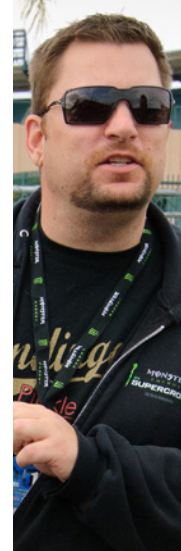
Obviously with the points lead the last couple weekends have been big...but mainly the pressure was just, "what's the matter with him? Why isn't he winning?" this and that. I don't care, believe me. The last thing I care about is what people think. I don't care what people think. For me, winning some races and then going on that drought...

You were mad after St. Louis.

I go out on the track to win races, regardless of anything else, and when I don't it's sometimes... It's not disappointing not to win right away but when you have a couple back-to-back or three or four races [without winning] for me that starts to get a little bit of weight. So to have three in a row, that's pretty nice.

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FINDING THE FRESH AIR...

By Steve Matthes

The 2014 Lucas Oil AMA Pro National Motocross championships are fast approaching. With two weeks off after this weekend's last supercross race in Las Vegas, the rumor mills have been churning something fierce in terms of what we're going to see come the first round in Southern California at Glen Helen Raceway.

Here's some of what we know and don't know coming into the outdoors.

-The big rumor floating around for the last couple of weeks concerned Ryan Villopoto not racing the nationals due to a knee injury that wasn't getting any better. This was obviously big news and to me Villopoto never denied the rumor. But he didn't confirm it either. Doing some more digging around found someone close to the situation telling me that we'd hear something "real soon" as to the replacement rider for Villopoto and as well, rumblings north of the border had Brett Metcalfe leaving his Canadian team to come ride for RV this summer. Villopoto himself wouldn't directly address these rumors until after New York City when he said he would be racing the nationals. So that's that right? Well, not exactly. I've been doing this too long to not know where there is smoke there is fire and there's definitely chatter behind the scenes and plenty of talk from people that would know that Villopoto was sitting out. Maybe something's changed with the injury, maybe there's been a change of plan but seeing as how Villopoto hasn't done any outdoor testing to my knowledge and from what I know from talking to other people, let's keep that door open a crack as to Villopoto sitting out the nationals... despite what he's said.

-Josh Hill's ride in NYC was impressive as he gathered a third place but he's only got one more race for the Ricky Carmichael/Carey Hart team before he's jettisoned for privateer Weston Peick for this summer's nationals. Also joining the team is Ivan Tedesco to race this summer until the injured Broc Tickle comes back. The team valued Tedesco's testing experience and brought back the former 250MX champion and decided that Peick would get the team better results than Hill who's not raced very many outdoor nationals in the last four to five years. So it should be interesting to see if Peick, the privateer hero, can better his good results with the help of a full factory squad this summer.

-As usual with the Christophe Pourcel, you just never know what to believe. The former MX2 World Champion and two-time 250SX champion is making a comeback to racing this summer over here and the stories and rumors are already flying around. The #377 is racing for the Valli Yamaha team (itself a crew that has been in hiatus for a year) and hasn't been seen much around but that doesn't stop people from making statements like Pourcel catching and passing Blake Baggett at a couple of local tracks. This led the hype machine to get into unbelievable levels but upon further checking with Baggett's Pro Circuit team, they hadn't seen Pourcel out at any point during their testing. Look for a press release soon from the manager of Pourcel's team (a former factory manager) and look for Pourcel to be on the line at Glen Helen. A first, a tenth or a 'did not show' would all be good guesses at this point. You just never know with Christophe.



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Photos: S. Cudby, H. Mitterhauer

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FEATURE



TONUS

By Adam Wheeler, Photos by Ray Archer

Back in OTOR #32 we pinpointed Arnaud Tonus as the man that everyone had to watch for in the 2012 season. Hopefully our spotlight isn't jinxed because the Swiss was blighted with injury that campaign and missed all of 2013 due to complications behind those physical problems (a badly broken leg). In 2014, at last, the stylish and effective racer that already turned heads in his debut term in MX2 in 2009 is now posting the kind of results that three factory teams believed were fully capable. At the time of writing Tonus retains the red plate in MX2. Something that just two riders have held since 2012.

At 23 years of age the Swiss' time on a 250 and in his present class is limited. His six foot frame and riding technique should be ideally suited to a 450 in MXGP and his current form means that he is the prime target for contract talks for 2015.

Tonus has bounced around teams: 2009 on a privateer KTM, Suzuki factory team in 2010 where he took his first podium but found his contract situation drawing him away from yellow and into limbo. Yamaha steered him into the Steve Dixon set-up for two years where he won a British Championship and also took more GP silverware but suffered a harsh pre-season crash that left him with a broken wrist and shoulder. Tempted away to CLS Monster Energy Kawasaki for 2013 Tonus is delivering the goods in his last year in green and on the KX250F.

As a journalist Arnaud is easy to work with. A good sense of humour gives way to an open and receptive character. No interview is too long or media request too much trouble. Multi-lingual of course, Tonus is quite a shy person and is rarely spotted without girlfriend Mary or his family. To get a more rounded view of '200' as a person and athlete we asked some key people in the Grand Prix paddock linked to the Tonus story for their opinions...



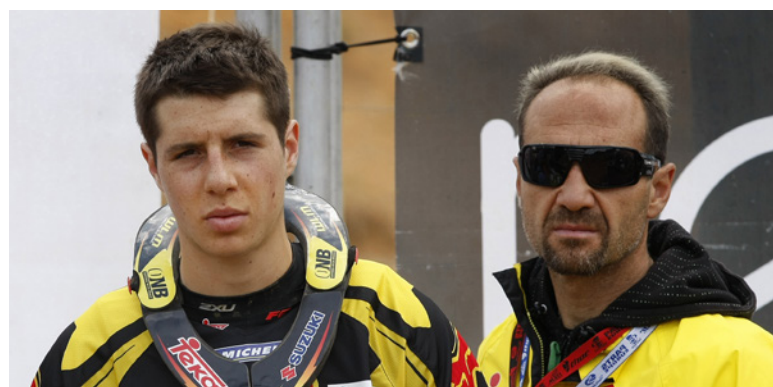
THOMAS RAMSBACHER, TEAM MANAGER ROCKSTAR ENERGY SUZUKI EUROPE. TEAM MANAGER FOR TONUS' STINT IN 2010

We picked Arnaud up when he was sixteen and only just finished his first season in the FIM World Championship. He was really surprised when we went to talk to him at Sweden that time but we saw what he was able to do with the bike at that age.

He was a very organised and focussed person and the circumstances and people around him also helped to make a very professional set-up. Unfortunately we only had one season to work together because his contract was handled that time by Teka and at the age of 2010 they moved on. We could not keep Arnaud but we wanted to because he took his first GP podium with us and we elevated him to a top five rider in MX2. The potential he showed there, we knew he would be a contender for the title and he is doing that this year.

Yes. He is not at the highest level as long as some other guys. Some in MX2 are reaching their peak and wont progress in MXGP. I think Arnaud can be a big surprise next year in MXGP.

One things was clear at the time and that was Roczen was outstanding and Arnaud learned a lot from him. Arnaud knew that he could not race against Roczen so there was never a problem between them and they became to be good friends.



ARNAUD TONUS



STEVE DIXON, BIKE IT YAMAHA COSWORTH TEAM PRINCIPAL. TEAM MANAGER FOR TONUS' STINT IN THE TEAM IN 2011-2012

Zach [Osborne] is exciting to watch because he travels the ground in such a rapid way, unlike anyone else. He is fast and not untidy, but somehow all over the bike! Whereas Arnaud can be at the same speed but look so fluid. Everyone will admit that Arnaud's strength is how much flow he gets through the corners and being efficient around obstacles. That allows him to go faster later in the race. It has taken time and I guess a bit of credit to the team [CLS] for sticking behind him because it is a tough sport at the moment and a bit cut-throat. All the best to him.

This is his last year to do it and I'm pleased that he is back battling at the front. Obviously I would prefer our riders to be winning but it has been a hard two years for him and I think it is good that he is achieving his dream at the moment. He does work hard, as do most riders, but he and his family are dedicated towards motocross so I can imagine how much pain something like 2013 must have been for them.

We could see the talent before Arnaud signed and then close-up when he was riding for us. He hadn't won a race at that stage but it was definitely coming. He is a really nice guy and we go on well with him and his family. Towards the end of his time, when he opted to change teams – even though he was under contract! – I feel that he was misguided and it wasn't part of his character. I sent him messages through his injuries. Even though I had some hard feelings over Arnaud leaving and the way it was done I couldn't bear any bad feeling towards him. I still think he would have achieved the same results with us.





ARNAUD TONUS

I think it is unbelievable what he is doing now to come back from his injuries and be fighting for the title. It is amazing. I think you can see a little bit of his inexperience as a consequence from missing race time over the past two years and you saw it in Italy as well as in Bulgaria but he has also been one of the fastest.

He is very strong and his technique on the bike is incredible and it makes for a powerful package. I think his lack of race time is the only thing that is keeping him from winning now.

We never had doubts about his quality as a rider. We had doubts about his injury because it took so long and every time the same problem occurred. Finally they found the problem and from there it was only positive and forward steps.

**HARRY NOLTE, CLS MONSTER
ENERGY KAWASAKI TEAM
MANAGER (MXGP).
TONUS STINT 2013-PRESENT**



SHAUN SIMPSON, TEAM-MATE 2012 BIKE IT YAMAHA COSWORTH:

"I think he was the second best team-mate I had after James Noble and that's just because he is just a genuinely nice and likeable guy. He is chilled and very relaxed. I don't think I have ever seen him stressed about anything. He walks to his own rhythm: literally! He just has one pace and you won't see him rushing to get anywhere.

Such an amazing talent on a motorcycle. He is one of those riders that you really want to do well. In Bulgaria he was a pleasure to watch and make the whole exercise of getting around Sevlievo so effortless.

His family and girlfriend are totally behind him and I think he is almost spoiled by how much they do and support him. I don't think many riders have that same level of backing behind them and the family had a tough time through those injuries.

I think he was always going to move on [from the Dixon Yamaha team]. He was limited by that suspension and while Steve [Dixon] can certainly build a very fast engine I don't think we saw the best of Arnaud. He was having a lot of arm-pump problems and the solution looked pretty simple to me and people around."





ARNAUD TONUS

**ZACH OSBORNE,
TEAM-MATE 2011-2012, BIKE IT
COSWORTH YAMAHA**

Arnaud is one of the most technical riders out there and I occasionally wish I had some of his finesse on the bike. Sometimes I think he doesn't like to push the edge but that's ok too.

He is a great guy and very deserving of his success! I'm super-happy to see him doing well especially after the last few seasons he's had with a lot injuries and bad luck. I'm really happy for him.





OXIDE
SERIES

**'TYRANT'
GOOGLES**


2014
COLLECTION



3 REASONS WHY ARAI HAVE REFITTED THE BAR

By Adam Wheeler

THE **MX-V** IS THE FIRST OFF-ROAD HELMET FROM ARAI FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS AND WITH THE LID ABOUT TO HIT DEALERS AND SHOPS WE WERE INVITED TO HOLLAND TO SEE HOW THE JAPANESE FIRM HAS MOVED AHEAD ONCE MORE...



ARAI MX-V



MX-V

ECE22-05

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FEATURE

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STILL THE SAFEST LID...

Arai's AIC (Arai Inspiration Centre) in Hove, UK, is a place that at first glance does not look like anything spectacular but once inside and among the features of the facility – a vast helmet hall of fame, demonstration areas and test machinery – the real stamp of class is in the sum of parts. Much like the company's lids. It is in the former truck garage that Arai Europe have gathered a smattering of media from across Europe to introduce their MX-V; an overdue but comprehensive addition to their helmet cannon from the Japanese privately-owned firm with more than 63 years of experience.

The MX-V replaces the VX-3. While holding the lid it is definitely carries a more modern design, has the same build quality feel and weight as normal Arais (so not the lightest on the market at a little over 1.4kg for the large unit but definitely the most robust) and still has that distinctive 'dome' shell. Arai has not 'broken' one of their 350kg moulds with this fresh product, created from scratch, but the MX-V is an eyebrow raising upgrade of the first order.

At the heart of the helmet – and all Arais – is the combination of the rockhard outer shell and world patented Polystyrene inner shell. The company pour all of their belief and fabrication into this synergy. We watch while an Arai employee demonstrates the mould process and then places an outer shell composite over his head, lies on the ground and invites someone to stand on top of him. We are then handed cutaways of flexible plastic shells in comparison (that make up many of the lighter and cheaper helmets on shop shelves) and they feel as safe as a paper bag. It was at that point that we were pretty sold on the forces that go into the MX-V.



The shell uses CLC (Composite Laminate Construction) layers of super-fibre that is six times more expensive than fibre glass but so much stronger. The shape of the helmet then embraces their R75 concept; in other words a continuous convex curve that promotes a rounder form and more sliding potential: rounder, smoother, stronger. "It is round and smooth and maybe old fashioned but it gives protection," says Eelco Van Beek, Arai Europe's Sales Manager. "Sliding is an important part of helmet safety and we need to explain the R75 because people are getting used to all shapes and forms nowadays."

There are plenty of protrusions and vents on the MX-V but Arai spokesmen insist these external additions easily break off in the event of a crash or contact where as the shell remains the focus point of the protection.

"Everything can come off or should break off," Van Beek explains. "Of course we've had a lot of riders help us develop this and it is always a compromise. We are doing speedway, motocross, enduro, freestyle and those guys are all using the same product. For a start the crashes are largely similar; it involves an impact and slide. Those are the two parameters we have looked at and combined for this helmet to get the right product for all off-road sports and activities."

On the road it is clear where the sliding ideology comes into play and we are shown some pretty graphic crashes – notably Shinya Nakano's 'fastest ever' on the Kawasaki at Mugello for the 2004 MotoGP Italian GP – as examples. But is it wholly relevant to off-road? "Definitely and even on sandy tracks you know that the terrain can be very hard," says Van Beek.

ARAI MX-V



“We asked ourselves whether this is something we could apply to off-road as well as street and we came to the answer that for sure it could work. You have to keep sliding and minimise that first impact.”

Despite the march of technology Arai still claim that polystyrene inner shell is the best-performing and versatile material at their disposal and their secret formulation and experience in working with the substance is one of the factors in differentiation with their rivals. “There are many other materials such as memory foams,” Van Beek continues. “Even with memory foam for it to return to shape it will take seconds and in a crash you won’t have that time. Also after a crash and damage to the outer shell then you won’t want to keep the helmet. We are very interested to see if someone can come up with that ‘super material’ that can outstrip polystyrene.”

The list of features does not end there and – naturally – it seems like there has been a plethora of tests for everything connected towards making a better helmet: higher penetration areas and test-busting resistance, a lower centre of gravity and liner material of different intensities, much more efficient venting, consideration for goggle strap and plastic screws as opposed to the vogue aluminium because the “peak, which is slightly bigger and wider, is designed to break” advocates Van Beek. Arai were one of the first to use the Emergency Release System based around the inner padding sections that can easily be popped out. A facial contour application reduces pressure on the soft parts of the face and lowers force on the jawbone for more comfortable and better fit. Dry cool material inside the helmet finishes off an item that sits happily alongside and at the end the impressive range of off-road helmets that Arai have unveiled over the past forty years. It might have been some time in the making but as the Arai Europe MD, Ingmar Stroeven, says: “we are ready when the product is ready.”

D

FEATURE

2

PRIORITIES...

It seems a little hard to believe in this day and age as companies grasp for market share, particularly in industries like motorcycling that continue to be surrounded by adversity (the environment, legislation, economy, changes in consumerism), that Arai persist to foster a genuine belief in product before the profit. Astonishingly it actually seems to be this way and lends further credence to the half-decade gap from the VX-3 until the MX-V.

"Things are difficult, especially in the economical situation we are in today. The good thing is that Arai is not a company with shareholders that apply pressure with the only goal of increasing market share or profit margins," says MD Ingmar Stroeven. "It is still a family-owned company and the head of the firm, Michio Arai, has a very strong focus. He does not want to compromise anything when it comes to safety and protection and if that means being one of the smaller brands in the market then we have to accept that. By the same token if the market picks up then we have to be a position where we can increase for the future. That is the philosophy and it will not change."

The conviction over the 'reason-for-being' behind the MX-V and Arai's other helmets (several more new models coming in 2014 and the flagship RX-7GP coming in 2015) is another selling point for the company. It almost seems like a strange tactic but appears to work so far and sensibly the firm have adopted this safety stance as part of their marketing strategy. There is a golden rule in their eyes. Van Beek: "If people only ever look at the shape or the price then you are not going to win but if you start explaining and showing and talking about all the experience we've accrued over the years...the fact that we are bikers ourselves, that we are a privately-owned company...basi-

ARAI FACT

All Arais are virtually hand made and take 16-18 hours each through 27 steps.

cally we know. There are people at Arai who have been working here a long, long time and it is difficult to consider moving to another company when you know the philosophy, passion and dedication to making helmets. Design is important, but it is number two. Function over design is crucial."

Arai's history dates back to pre-second world war in Tokyo as a hat maker. Their influence on helmet protection and into motorsport, four wheels and two, mean that their proven reach places them as one of the leading, most trustworthy and durable names. "I've worked for Arai for about twenty years now and every year you see brands coming up and others disappearing," Stroeven says. "Some stay, but there are only a few. In the long run we keep on doing the same thing and it works."







FEATURE

ARAI MX-V

3

RACING
PROOF..

ARAI FACT

*Arai make one
off-road helmet
for every six
on-road in their
overall produc-
tion numbers*



PLAY

Like only a few other companies such as Alpinestars, Dainese and other helmet brands like Shoei and AGV Arai use and profit from the racing world. Dani Pedrosa, Cal Crutchlow, Colin Edwards, Nicky Hayden, Hiroshi Aoyama, Maverick Vinales and Jonathan Rea are just some of the Arai names on tarmac while Joel Roelants has been spotted using the white MX-V in MXGP motos this season. The CLS Monster Energy Kawasaki team – Tonus, Ferrandis, Lupino and Covington - run Arais in MX2.

Racing is a relatively unwilling test bed for the company at extreme levels but they are present through a fondness of being part of the scene. Many might forget that back in 1981 they were market leaders in 'cross and the first with detachable mouth-guard. Racing is where Arai take pride in showing their wares. Stroeven: "We don't make special helmets for racers and then a general one for consumers. The products are exactly the same. I remember a story from the time of Kevin Schwantz. It was at Assen and he'd crashed a couple of times. I had just started to work for Arai and we'd run out of helmets at the track so I went to a local dealer to buy a Schwantz replica! We took it back to the track and put the sponsor logos on it and that was his race helmet."

"We come from racing," he insists. "There is a saying in the paddock: 'good helmets pay crap and crap helmets pay good'. We try to convince people that safety is an issue. Someone like Marc De Reuver has admitted he might get more money with another brand but with an Arai he gets paid back in terms of good protection."

De Reuver and Roelants were at the AIC on the day of the launch. The Belgian has suffered several concussions in his career most notably in the season where he won his first and sole Grand Prix in 2012. "I've tested the Arai a lot already – even yesterday I crashed quite hard! All the times I've ridden with Arai I've never had a concussion or anything like that," he vindicated. "I've used different brands and not been so lucky. It is hard to get a good result on the track with a concussion!"

You cannot scan along a Grand Prix gate these days without spotting at least four different makes of neck brace. In light of some comments by segment leader Leatt that helmet companies could do more to harmonise with neck protection we asked Van Beek if the MX-V had been created with this area in mind. "We know it works with a lot of systems but it cannot always match," he conceded. "It depends on the length of your neck. It has not been a major factor in the development of our protection. We still believe that the neck should be able to move and should not be so rigid."

What about some of the more interesting helmet innovations in the paddock? 6D helmets seem to be gaining good reviews and feedback for their nodule system. "It is interesting that people think about new ways," offered Van Beek. "If you look at polystyrene then we have been using this since the 1930s and have imagined many times that there must be another material offering better protection but the reality is that there isn't. Very often people talk about rotational forces but there is no way of really measuring this. There are no guidelines for it. I'm curious [about 6D] because you have this distance between the inner and outer shell, so what happens in a bigger crash? Those springs are designed for a certain strength and compression. What happens if you have an accident with much more energy involved? We haven't tested it. It is good that people are thinking of new ways but we still believe that this is the safest direction for riders."





THE BOSS SPEAKS **INGMAR STROEVEN, MD, ARAI EUROPE**

The general message and philosophy around Arai is the preoccupation with the product over any business interest. As a businessman can this approach be a bit frustrating? Also because of the cultural divide with the Japanese and Europe...?

I suppose it is but then that is part of our role here in Europe. We have to be between that strong belief from the Japanese side and then the other side with all the distributors, dealers and market demands and a more commercial perspective. I would not say 'frustrating' is the right word but sometimes we think 'why can't we innovate quicker?' or 'the market is ready, why can't we do that product release sooner?' but in Japan the idea is that we are ready when the product is ready, not the other way around. You could see it as a frustration but if you understand what Arai is about then it is also a very nice thing.

Arai always seemed to have such a heavy and important link with racing...

We use it as one of our marketing tools but I think that Arai basically comes from the racing scene anyway. We do a lot with our racing service and have one person in each F1, MotoGP and World Superbike. We invest a lot in terms of making the helmets and them available to those athletes with us. Maybe in the past racing was even more important in terms of marketing and promotion but nowadays it is quite hard to find any races live on television because most are pay-per-view so perhaps

there is less scope. However for us it is still one of the main things to be involved in.

There has been a lack of push in off-road though...

I think for the last two years we have been in a position where we have been 'waiting' for a new model that could catch the interest of consumers. We were not strongly involved in the world championship [FIM MXGP] but we were quite dominant in the Enduro market and in the UK especially we had a high percentage of riders using Arai. With the MX-V I think we have a great product to be able to do more in Grand Prix and focus on more racing.

With so much choice for consumers now what is the best way for you to promote this new model?

It is tricky because safety is not a sexy argument! Although everybody wears a helmet and are mindful of its role to nevertheless always focus on protection and different safety levels is something that is not easily explainable to consumers. They still look at the brand, like the model, the colours, the fit and they accept it. That is also why we have the inspiration centre in Holland – the AIC – to train a lot of dealers. Over the years we have had hundreds here to show and teach them the differences between the helmets and ones that offer better protection than say a plastic one that is on the market. Gaps in quality is still a subject we feel we need to educate people better.

You see so many options for helmets now. Is it a tough market?

It is a market that is getting smaller. There are less motorcyclists and bikes being sold and every person that buys a helmet and chooses another brand is another consumer you are losing. The bigger picture is that the motorcycle industry is reducing. In Holland you need to do three exams to be able to ride any kind of bike on the road. Standards are getting tougher every year. In the past I think a lot of young people liked to ride a bike but nowadays I doubt if that mentality is the same.

That's quite worrying really as it isn't a beneficial situation for anybody in the industry...

Yeah, the market will get smaller and that is likely to happen. I think the motorcycle industry in general needs to promote itself. It is good that some manufacturers at the moment are offering new models and affordable ones, not just the big, fast expensive things. The smaller bikes are apparently riding well and that could be the way to go.

So how do you feel about Arai's position in 2014?

I'm convinced that things will improve, talking specifically about Arai. I think we had some issues in a few countries we are represented in and these have been cleared. People are getting more motivated and optimistic in general. Even places like Spain where unemployment was reaching crazy levels at one point the buying level is slowly going up. It is going to be better than it has been in the last couple of years.

ARAI FACT

It takes 12 minutes for a Japanese worker to make the Arai outer shells by placing fabrics (like Kevlar) inside five moulds. 125 helmets are produced each day by just one employee. The shells are removed from the casing, weighted and check for imperfections. The shells are cut by laser as opposed to water to maintain the fibre contact.





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MotoGP



MotoGP ARGENTINA



PLAY



TRIPLER OUT OF SIGHT

AND KEEPS ON CLIMBING. IT SEEMS VERY LITTLE CAN STOP MARC MARQUEZ. GAVIN EMMETT WENT ALL THE WAY TO ARGENTINA FOR BT SPORT. HE ALSO SCRIBBLED SOME WORDS FOR US...

Photos by Honda Pro Images, Ducati Corse Press, yamahamotogp.com, KTM images/Gold and Goose

MotoGP rocked up in Argentina for the first time in 15 years, with a 50,000 plus Sunday crowd getting more than their money's worth at the brand new Termas de Rio Hondo circuit. The track designer's boasts that the layout would throw up great action actually proved fairly close to the mark after three decent races.

Moto3 was probably the pick of the bunch once again with a gripping three-way battle for the lead between Jack Miller, Alex Marquez and Romano Fenati undecided until the final dice-roll. A slight mistake from the Aussie on the corner before the penultimate right-hander meant his preparation for the key bend was compromised. The Italian certainly forced the issue as he smashed his way through, but Miller couldn't argue...he would likely have done exactly the same. It led to the VR46 team's first win in just its third race in Moto3, with Miller eventually recovering to hold off an impressive challenge from Belgian Livio Loi to take third behind Marquez.

It could be forgiven if the atmosphere dropped in the Argentine northwest somewhat after that classic scrap, but Moto2 wasn't without its highs either. Tito Rabat eventually cruised his way to a second victory of 2014 ahead of Xavier Simeon but behind Luis Salom and Simone Corsi had a typically fiery affair to decide third. The Spaniard was almost pummeled into submission by the Italian's endless stymieing of his race, but just managed to find enough of a gap by the final lap to take third, whilst Corsi actually lost fourth after another brilliant effort from Aegerter saw him move from 16th on the grid to sneak the position.

Then it was the turn of the stars of MotoGP with the odds against a Marquez hat-trick as long as the journey to Termas itself. After a shaky start to the weekend, the champion had been a step ahead of the rest in terms of learning the flowing new trajectory but his stunning pole position time had actually put him on the dirty side of the grid. That allowed Jorge Lorenzo, who started from second, to exorcise start-line demons from Austin as he blasted off the line to the holeshot, whilst Marquez saw fit to take no unnecessary risks.

The rest of the field around him took advantage of this early reticence as the likes of Dovizioso, Iannone, Rossi and Bradl all barged their way about. Marquez wasn't panicking however, and exuded confidence





after dropping back to sixth place. It is a measure of a rider who after 15 crashes in 2013 still hasn't hit the deck at any point since his leg was broken in a dirt-track spill back in February. He got his hard tyres up to speed and in the blink of an eye was up to second, eyeing Lorenzo in front.

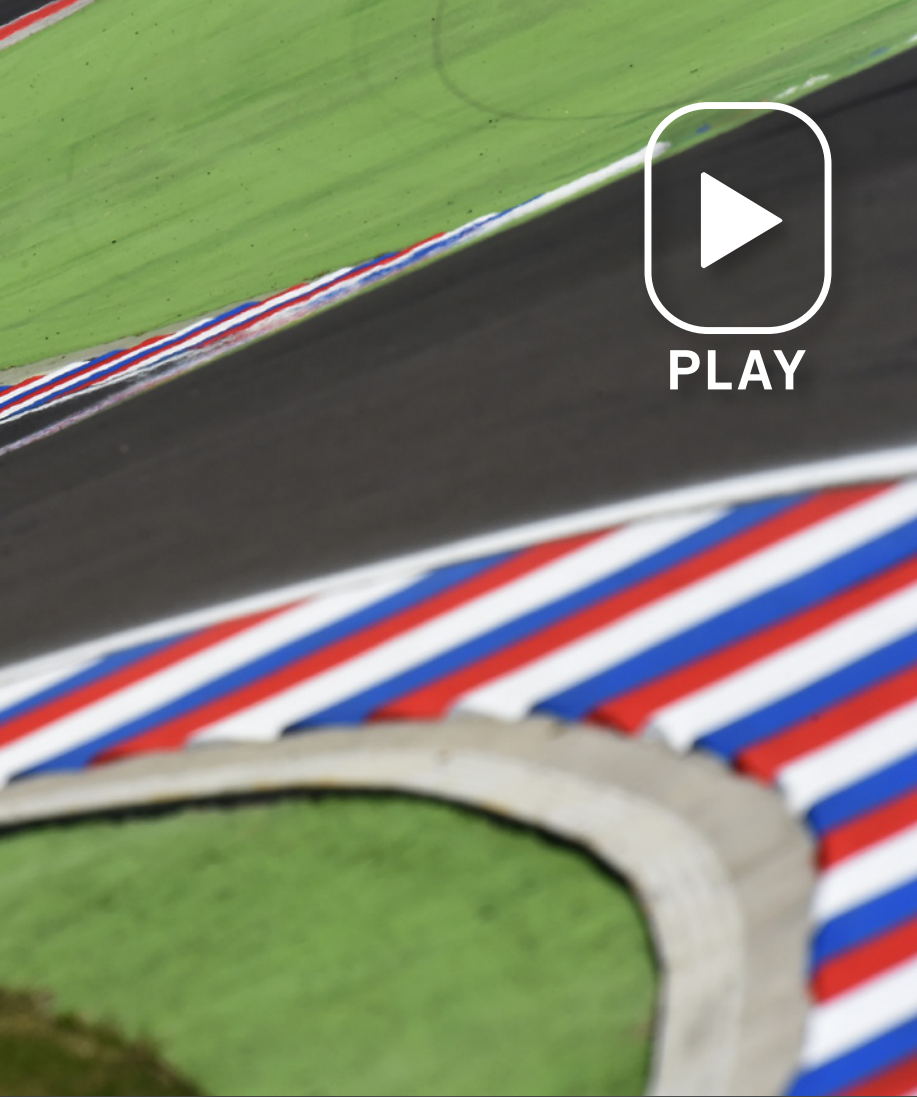
Credit must go to Lorenzo for his spirit in this race after what has been a rotten start to the year. He was back to his best as he dictated the pace like on so many occasions in the past, but even as he knocked out a decent rhythm Marquez appeared to be doing nothing more than playing along with the Mallorcan until he eased his way past with eight to go for a solo run to the line.

Behind, the action seemed more like a Moto3 scrap than a 1000cc battle. Bradl and Rossi traded blows, preventing the Italian from mounting a podium challenge, whilst Dani Pedrosa was impressive to carve his way through from seventh at one point to finish less than two seconds behind his young upstart team-mate in second. His late pass on Lorenzo was cruel for the Yamaha rider, but the fact there was no response showed how well he had managed his tyres as he stormed to the fastest lap of the race on lap 22 of 25, whereas Lorenzo was just happy to seal third place.

With the Spaniards completing the podium as they did so many times last year, Rossi was disappointed to only manage fourth when second was on the cards, whilst behind Bradl in fifth Andrea Iannone took a career-best sixth spot.

As the Spanish Royal March played out under the scorching Argentine sun, another few thousand fans will have been added to the expected throng at Jerez in just a couple of days time. The masses will all be travelling to Andalusia in hope of a repeat of last year's final corner epic but more than likely they'll just be content to see the work of MotoGP's newest genius and World Champion in close proximity.





PLAY



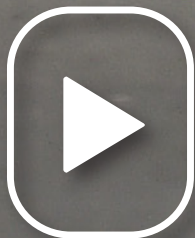
MotoGP ARGENTINA

Miller was close to his hat-trick but keeps a 100% podium record in the frantic Moto3 contest



Rossi keeps in the thick of it and Bradl gets some blue paint. The Italian will be getting the podium itch after his fine showing in Qatar. Hiroshi Aoyama (right) makes the best Open class spot for the first time with tenth place while Esteve Rabat goes 2 in 3 in Moto2





PLAY



MotoGP ARGENTINA





MotoGP ARGENTINA

22 points and 7th place in the championship could well be Jorge Lorenzo's worst start to a season for a decade. He looked back to his usual potency and speed at Termas though and Jerez is next...



Busy scenes at the start of MotoGP and Andrea Dovizioso was powerless to prevent the 'other Andrea', Iannone, reaching the finish as the best-placed Ducati rider





CLASSIFICATION & CHAMPIONSHIP

MotoGP RESULT

Riders

1	Marc Marquez, SPA	Honda
2	Dani Pedrosa, SPA	Honda
3	Jorge Lorenzo, SPA	Yamaha
4	Valentino Rossi, ITA	Yamaha
5	Stefan Bradl, GER	Honda

MotoGP CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS (after 3 of 18 rounds)

Riders	Points
1 Marc Marquez	75
2 Dani Pedrosa	56
3 Valentino Rossi	41
4 Andrea Dovizioso	34
5 Andrea Iannone	25

Moto2 RESULT

Riders

1	Esteve Rabat, SPA	Kalex
2	Xavier Simeon, BEL	Suter
3	Luis Salom, SPA	Kalex
4	Dominique Aegerter, SUI	Suter
5	Simone Corsi, ITA	Forward KX

Moto2 CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS (after 3 of 18 rounds)

Riders	Points
1 Esteve Rabat	70
2 Mika Kallio	42
3 Maverick Viñales	38
4 Simone Corsi	33
5 Dominique Aegerter	29



Moto3 RESULT

Riders

1	Romano Fenati, ITA	KTM
2	Alex Marquez, SPA	Honda
3	Jack Miller, AUS	KTM
4	Livio Loi, BEL	Kalex KTM
5	Alex Rins, SPA	Honda

Moto3 CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS (after 3 of 18 rounds)

Riders	Points
1 Jack Miller	66
2 Romano Fenati	49
3 Efren Vazquez	42
4 Alex Marquez	40
5 Alex Rins	35



PLAY

MotoGP ARGENTINA

A nightmare three Grands Prix for Alvaro Bautista means he has yet to register in the MotoGP standings. Simeon's 2nd place result in Moto2 was Belgium's best in the class and highest result this century



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FRESH PLACES, FACES...

By Gavin Emmett

If Buenos Aires is the Paris of South America, then Termas de Rio Hondo is Guéret... Never heard of it? Well nor have many Parisians, but it's the regional hub of the French province of La Creuse, where wolves roam wild in the rugged Limousin countryside, and the population dwindles as people gradually migrate to the big cities. It's almost as far away both physically and metaphorically as you can get in one country.

But the sleepy spa town of Termas was woken from its slumber as the MotoGP machine rolled in last weekend. After 30 hours of gruelling travelling, riders arrived at the newly built airstrip to be greeted by throngs of locals as if they'd just come back triumphant from the football World Cup. They descended in their thousands to catch a mere glimpse of their idols who, in a Euro-centric World Championship, have seemed so utterly distant up to now.

Some riders found the boisterous hysteria a nuisance, and the usual crowd of cynics took an instant dislike to the circuit itself; true, the facilities weren't a patch on the ultra-high standards of a couple of weeks earlier in Texas, and the paint was still drying as the paddock threw open its new gates, but the track is a real gem and the old-school charm of the event was undeniable.

MotoGP is a World Championship, and the reality is that not everywhere in the world boasts the style and pzazz of a Paris or Austin, and we should be thankful for that. They said the race here would never happen, but it did. They say that it can't last, but I sincerely hope it does, and I hope that it continues to throw the spotlight on a beautiful and hospitable part of the world which has taken the sport to its heart and won over many doubters with its gusto and sheer passion.

Most of us would never have even known Termas existed without MotoGP extending its reach back into South America, but I'm sincerely glad it did.





TEST

YAMAHA MT-07



COME BACK

**YAMAHA HAVE FIRED BACK WITH THEIR
CAPABLE MT-07.... ROLAND BROWN IS HAPPY
TO REPORT FROM THE SADDLE**

Photos by Matteo Cavadini, Jonathan Godin & Henny Stern



PLAY

All of a sudden Yamaha is acting like a giant grizzly bear that has just woken up from hibernation and is roaring around and attacking everything in sight. Having produced little of note and seemed in serious decline during several sleepy years following the credit crunch, the firm announced a reawakening with last year's impressive naked MT-09 and XV950 cruiser.

Several new-for-2014 models, unveiled at last year's shows, included a three-wheeled scooter (the Tricity) that is about to go into production. But it's the MT-07 that has done most to put Yamaha back in the spotlight. Like the MT-09, the MT-07 (called the FZ-07 in Canada, and presumably also the US when it eventually goes on sale there) it's a lean naked roadster, in this case with two instead of three cylinders, and a unique capacity of 689cc.

Sporty twin-cylinder streetbikes are in Yamaha's DNA, though the previous ones didn't look — or sound or smell — anything like this. With its blend of punchy, 74bhp parallel twin motor and light weight, the MT-07 follows in the tyre tracks of the great two-stroke twins such as the RD350, RD400 and RD350LC that built the firm's reputation in the Seventies and Eighties. The MT-07's dohc, eight-valve engine means it's a very different bike but it shares some of the old strokers' raw feel, and importantly also their competitive price. The basic model sells for just £5199 in Britain; for less than 6000 elsewhere in Europe. That would be an eye-opener from any firm, let alone one that until recently was crippled by high prices due to the yen's strength.





YAMAHA MT-07



TEST

The MT-07's unique capacity of 689cc was chosen not to fit into an existing market division but because Yamaha's engineers decided it gave an optimum balance between power, torque and economy. The emphasis is on flexibility and midrange torque. That 74bhp output is unexceptional for a bike of this capacity but the maximum torque figure of 68N.m is impressive, and it's produced at just 6500rpm.

Chassis layout is based on a frame made from steel tubes of varied widths and thicknesses, for optimum weight and rigidity. At 164kg dry, the MT is outstandingly light for a bike of its power output. It's sharply styled and aggressive looking, and feels well put together as you throw a leg over the seat (reasonably low at 805mm), grip the narrow one-piece bar and

look out over the compact instrument panel. Just about the only disappointing aspect of the MT is its sound: a dull grumble from the short and rather too efficient single silencer. But all's soon forgiven once you're under way on a bike that feels light, lively and effortlessly controllable. The Yamaha pulls crisply from low revs then picks up the pace in the midrange, accelerating enthusiastically with minimal need to use the sweet-shifting six-speed gearbox.





If you want to ride harder the MT is happy to oblige. It has an enjoyably rev-happy character and stays smooth up at the 9000rpm mark at which peak power is produced. The exposed riding position means it feels fast even at a relatively modest pace — so like any naked bike it's not ideal for motorways — but it soon rumbles past the 100mph mark, heading for a top speed of about 115mph.

Chassis performance is very good, again helped by the lack of weight. Steering is precise and neutral, if not quite as quick as might be expected from a spec sheet that reveals a short wheelbase and sporty steering geometry. The relatively wide rear tyre doesn't aid agility but gives more grip than the narrower rubber of many rivals.



Suspension at both ends gives plenty of travel, and can feel slightly vague under hard cornering on a bumpy road, but both handling and ride quality are fine for a bike of this level. Braking performance is very adequate too, although the front has a slightly soft feel at the lever, and doesn't bite as hard as might be expected from its high specification of twin 282mm discs and four-piston Monobloc calipers. ABS is an option (costing £400 in the UK).



TEST

YAMAHA MT-07





The MT is a simple bike but shows evidence of thoughtful design. The instrument panel is compact but comprehensive. The seat is thinly padded but wide enough to be respectably comfortable, though a pillion doesn't get much to hold. The fuel tank holds a less than generous 14 litres: good for 200 miles according to Yamaha, but in the real world more like 130 miles if you're making use of the performance and getting roughly 50mpg from the impressively economical engine.

There's plenty of potential to upgrade the bike from an accessories list that includes practical screens, luggage and heated grips as well as fancy billet aluminium parts and an Akrapovic silencer. But the great thing about the MT-07 is how well it works just as it comes. Like those great two-strokes from the Seventies and Eighties, it's quick, light, fun to ride and excellent value for money. And it's proof that the big beast that is Yamaha is awake and roaring again.





SBK

ROUND 3 ASSEN

ASSEN (NED) • APRIL 27th • Rnd 3 of 14

Race 1 winner: Sylvain Guintoli, Aprilia

Race 2 winner: Jonathan Rea, Honda

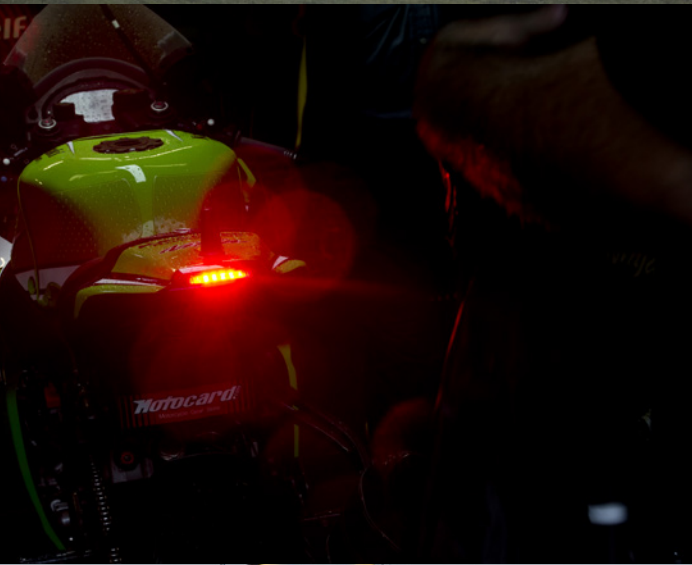
DUTCH DAMP

A RACE AND A BIT FOR SBK AT ASSEN

Photos by Graeme Brown, Kawasaki Racing Team, Milagro, Ducati Corse Press,
suzuki-racing.com, www.worldsbk.com







PLAY

WORLD SBK ASSEN



PLAY

Assen has always been a thoroughbred event on the WSB calendar, even back to the days when Fogarty and Chili were waging war in nightwear. From two disrupted races it was Sylvain Guintoli who earned the first chequered flag but Jonathan Rea - pictured centre - was the only rider on both podiums as the rain fell in Holland



Second place for Alex Lowes was the jumpstart the Brit needed for his season on the GSX-R1000

WORLD SBK ASSEN



WORLD SBK ASSEN



Loris Baz continues to set a rapier pace to keep team-mate Tom Sykes on his toes and is third in the championship while Davide Guigliano holds the upperhand over Chaz Davies in terms of podiums



Davies is equal top in terms of fastest laps set in the season so far but is still waiting for his first champagne spray on the Ducati. At Assen front end chatter problems kept him mid-top ten while the races were still active



WORLD SBK ASSEN





SBK CLASSIFICATION & CHAMPIONSHIP

SBK RACE ONE RESULT

Riders

1	Tom Sykes, GBR	Kawasaki
2	Loris Baz, FRA	Kawasaki
3	Jonathan Rea, GBR	Honda
4	Chaz Davies, GBR	Ducati
5	Eugene Laverty, IRL	Suzuki

SBK RACE TWO RESULT

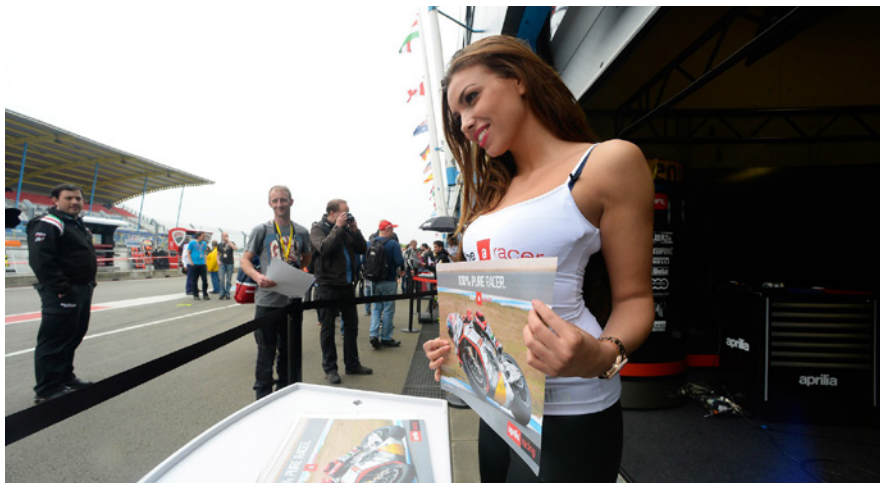
Riders

1	Tom Sykes, GBR	Kawasaki
2	Loris Baz, FRA	Kawasaki
3	Marco Melandri, ITA	Honda
4	Sylvain Guintoli, FRA	Ducati
5	Jonathan Rea, GBR	Suzuki

SBK CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS (2 of 14 rounds)

Riders

1	Tom Sykes, GBR	75
2	Loris Baz, FRA	71
3	Sylvain Guintoli, FRA	64
4	Marco Melandri, ITA	49
5	Jonathan Rea, GBR	48

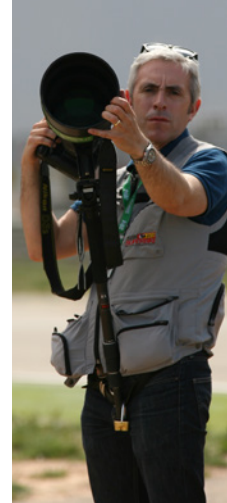


WORLD SBK ASSEN



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RIGHT AND WRONG POWERS...

By Graeme Brown

Every sportsperson or politician will always tell you that sport and politics should never intertwine. This is rarely the case, however, and sporting events being mixed with or tarnished by political meddling has been going on for years.

The Russians seem to be quite good at getting the two tangled. The 1980 Moscow Olympics was famously boycotted by a number of nations in a reaction to the then USSR's involvement in Afghanistan. The recent Sochi Winter Olympics were the centre of a political storm in the build-up but thankfully passed off without any hiccups of note.

With the current crisis in Ukraine and Crimea the Moscow Raceway round of the WSBK Championship has been cancelled - "The current political situation affects the capabilities of a number of key partner companies essential to run the event." Read the official PR.

In reality the politics of the situation have little to do with the reasons to withdraw the fixture from the 2014 calendar. It is the knock-on effects; financial sanctions currently placed on Russian banks and companies and transport and logistic problems, which mean that the actual running of the event is high-on impossible.

There was, however, a palpable sigh of relief around the paddock when the press release from Dorna was circulated at Motorland Aragon two weeks ago. There seems little appetite in the paddock to return to Moscow Raceway. The first race was plagued by teething troubles and infrastructure problems; intermittent power failures; periods with no running water; little or no communications network all of which made life difficult for everyone at the meeting.

There were also a number of issues with the local hotels. I stayed in a place that looked as though it had been a country retreat for former Party officials complete with seedy nightclub in the basement. There was a run of food poisoning that went through all teams that stayed there, quite literally, with some people being diagnosed with e-coli on their return home.

To add to that last year we sadly lost the young Italian talent Andrea Antonelli in the Supersport race in terrible weather conditions. So many people, me included, found the thought of returning for the next eight years less than appetizing.

Most teams welcomed the fact that they wouldn't have to send their trucks in convoy across Europe and back to get there. The Moscow race is not treated as a flyaway so the teams head from their bases meet up at the Russian border with Latvia and travel along what was at times a gravel road to get to Volokolamsk and the race track. Once there it was felt that without with the incredibly enthusiastic people in the Yakhinich organization there wasn't that much of a welcome from the local people.

So whilst stability seems a long way off in Ukraine and Crimea, the feeling I get amongst most people in the WSBK paddock is that they are happy to have a reason to scratch the race from the schedule. It will be a shame for the Yakhinich Motorsport group, who promote the event as well as running the MV Agusta Superbike and Supersport teams, if we don't race in Russia again as they worked tirelessly to get the event on the calendar and were immensely proud to have the WSBK race at their home circuit. Politics, with a large and a small P may however put paid to that in the long term.

RACING PERFORM

2014 Supported Racing Teams

HONDA HRC MOTOCROSS, KAWASAKI RACING TEAM, DPI9 RACING,
YAMAHA FACTORY RACING, HONDA JTECH, 24MX HONDA RACING,
LATVIA HUSQVARNA RACING, TM RACING MX/EN/SM,
KTM MARCHETTI RACING, WILVO FORKRENT KTM,
KEMEA YAMAHA RACING, TEAM MOTORACE KTM, TEAM LR30,
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PISTONS

RACERS CHOICE LINE

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maxxazaphoto | 71007

2T & 4T POWER



GAUTIER PAULIN

MXGP WORLD CHAMPION



MX

GRAND PRIX OF BULGARIA

SEVLIEVO • APRIL 20th • Rnd 5 of 18

MXGP winner: Tony Cairoli, KTM

MX2 winner: Jeffrey Herlings, KTM

KTM GET THRU

By Adam Wheeler, Photos by Ray Archer



MXGP BULGARIA

Arm-pump made MX2 World Champion Jeffrey Herlings look more vulnerable than ever on a Grand Prix bike but he still weathered the discomfort to take a fourth win from five this season



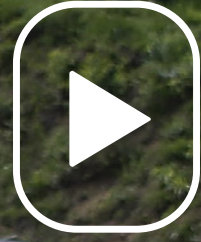
PLAY

Some of the ruts from the rain-hit Sevlievo terrain were nothing short of brutal. Paulin (21) would win the drier first outing but the lowered pace and increased technical demands evened things out for Cairoli on the 350SX-F and a first premier class victory in Bulgaria was welcome





MXGP BULGARIA



PLAY





Petar Petrov was a force of nature to sixth position in the MX2 class in front of his home fans. Romain Febvre lost out on the podium on the last lap (centre, below) while Clement Desalle was unhappy with the track prep



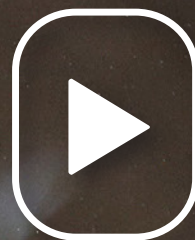




MXGP BULGARIA

Paulin was uncatchable in the first moto and will need several more of those performances to close the championship points gap to Cairoli after his unfortunate mechanical DNF in the previous round





PLAY

A crucial mistake in the first moto caused Arnaud Tonus to lose another chequered flag. His third podium in a row meant that he keeps the red plate with Herlings breathing down his neck by 4 points

MXGP BULGARIA



Jordi Tixier eased some of the building pressure on his shoulders and took third place thanks to Febvre's mistake. The Frenchman tackled the huge ruts with more confidence and better starts. Jorge Zaragoza (left) and Ben Watson (right) launched the European EMX250 series with victories (moto and overall)



PLAY





Is Jeremy Van Horebeek in peak form with four podiums from five Grands Prix? Or is the Belgian slowing building a convincing title threat? The Yamaha man still needs to move up another level to consider maiden moto and GP victories in the class in what is just his second season on the 450





MINISTRY OF SPORTS
MUNICIPALITY OF SEVLIEVO
BULGARIAN MOTORCYCLE FEDERATION
ORGANIZING COMMITTEE
FIM MOTOCROSS WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP
GRAND PRIX BULGARIA 2014
CLASS MXGP



MONSTER
ENERGY





MXGP BULGARIA

CLASSIFICATION & WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

MXGP OVERALL RESULT

Riders

1	Tony Cairoli, ITA	KTM
2	Gautier Paulin, FRA	Kawasaki
3	Jeremy Van Horebeek, BEL	Yamaha
4	Clement Desalle, BEL	Suzuki
5	Kevin Strijbos, BEL	Suzuki

MX2 OVERALL RESULT

Riders

1	Jeffrey Herlings, NED	KTM
2	Arnaud Tonus, SUI	Kawasaki
3	Jordi Tixier, FRA	KTM
4	Dylan Ferrandis, FRA	Kawasaki
5	Romain Febvre, FRA	Husqvarna

MXGP WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS (AFTER 5 OF 18 ROUNDS)

Riders	Points
1 Tony Cairoli	222
2 Clement Desalle	194
3 Jeremy Van Horebeek	194
4 Gautier Paulin	180
5 Max Nagl	166

MX2 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS (AFTER 5 OF 18 ROUNDS)

Riders	Points
1 Arnaud Tonus	198
2 Jeffrey Herlings	194
3 Glenn Coldenhoff	176
4 Romain Febvre	158
5 Dylan Ferrandis	154

ANOTHER ROLE?

By Adam Wheeler

The evolution of Grand Prix motocross over the past fifteen years has delivered some important changes: a few desirable, some not quite so, and at the centre of the whirlwind are the riders. Their landscape has shifted to the point where arriving to the very peak of the sport does not necessarily guarantee a hefty income or contract and a team can be a staging point for resources and machinery rather than a salary. The smart ones will look around them and see where they can self-generate sponsorship and boost their social media profile to the point where a single tweet might reach more followers than those watching them at four race meetings combined.

However there seems to a fresh option emerging for those hunting around the peripheries of the narrowing elite of the factory teams: The Substitute. From KTM, Suzuki, Honda, Yamaha, Kawasaki and Husqvarna efforts over the past eighteen months at least one works racer has sat on the sidelines at some point due to injury. Yamaha were perhaps the worst hit. Even fielding six riders across MXGP and MX2 was no guarantee of presence. At one point in 2012 just two representatives made it through the Grand Prix paddock gates whereas fill-ins included Michael Leib, Mel Pocock on otherwise European duty, Carlos Campano and Kristian Whatley.

In a talk with KTM Sport Director Pit Beirer at the Grand Prix of Trentino the German admitted that he was thinking of extending the Red Bull KTM team from four to six riders for 2015. He illustrated the fact that the large orange rac-

ing set-up was housing just one racer (the best one at that in 222) with the long-term absence of Ken De Dycker and pointed out that the vast investment in the Husqvarna operations were also hurting due to Tyla Rattray's finger injury. Beirer commented that the financial expenditure for eighteen rounds was too much not to have bikes on the racetrack and that running a younger, third rider did not involve a great deal more expense in terms of resources – the rigs have the room – but gave KTM extra cover for the war of attrition that is the full MXGP season.

“There is a fresh option for those around the factory teams: The Substitute...”

The accidents involving Glenn Coldenhoff (another blow for the fortune-cursed Rockstar Suzuki Europe squad), Todd Waters (again a blow for Husqvarna) and Max Nagl last week have culled three teams in terms of implications for 2014 and potential backing for 2015. Nagl's injury record is miserable but Waters is a rookie to Grand Prix. The accident itself raises another issue altogether – that of professional racers using busy public circuits for training and the risks they pose through 'traffic' and varying levels of experience – but it means that those bosses in Red and White are again scrabbling around to see which athletes are a) free and b) could possibly do a job mid-season.



Pascal Rauchenecker is an example of somebody who could consider the Substitute route by means of association. The 20 year old Austrian has dipped out of Grand Prix for 2014 after two injury hit terms in MX2 and standing over 6ft has decided to get up to speed on a KTM 350SX-F with a well-supported new team in the ADAX MX Masters German Championship. With commitments only on a national level Rauchenecker was available to step-in for Rat-tray on the factory Husqvarna in both Thailand and Brazil. His appearance meant huge odds. In other words a total lack of testing and last minute adjustment but for the Husky guys he was a sound, promising rider with GP experience who was willing to step-in.

Undoubtedly Rauchenecker would prefer to be at the highest level and admitted he is looking for a way back to GP for 2015 but his situation was not unfavourable, and he might soon be turning out for Antti Pyrhonen's team again if a more permanent fill-in for Waters is not found for the rest of this year.

Realistically 'The Substitute' would suit riders on the periphery of Grand Prix; the not-quite-so-green youngster that is considering European EMX250 competition but could easily jump into MX2 for a team. MXGP and the 350/450 equation is a little more complex but a side project could feasibly be achieved with say funding to contest the still-to-be-properly-born European 300cc two-stroke series and a priority with a testing role as further back-up, and status as a primed replacement if the need arises. This

could be a route for some of the athletes in 2015 that will find themselves at a loss with around twenty saddles on the Officially Approved Teams list and the influx of early half that amount drifting up from MX2.

“...twenty saddles on the OAT list and half that drifting up from MX2 for 2015...”

Then again the 23 age limit on the MX2 class could evaporate and many teams and manufacturers could still end up rolling the dice to start and finish racing seasons with their principal riding investments in one piece.

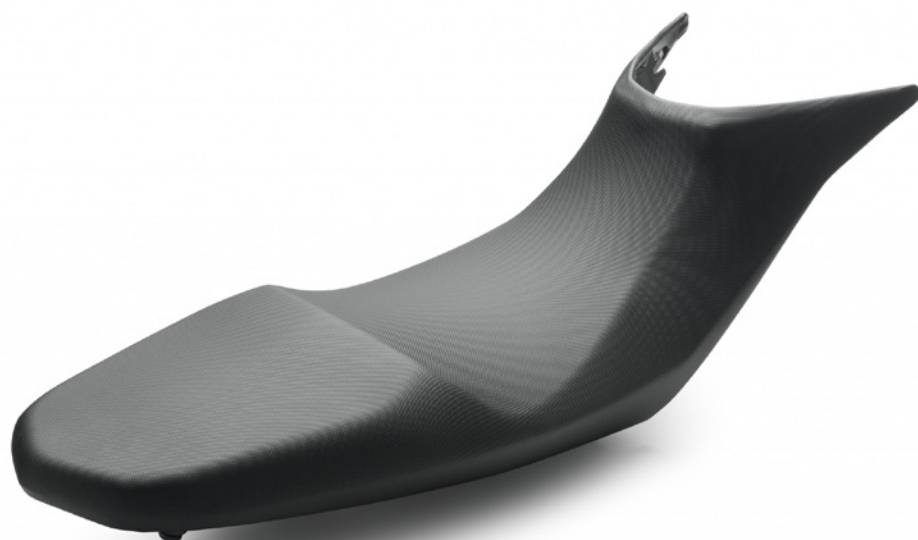
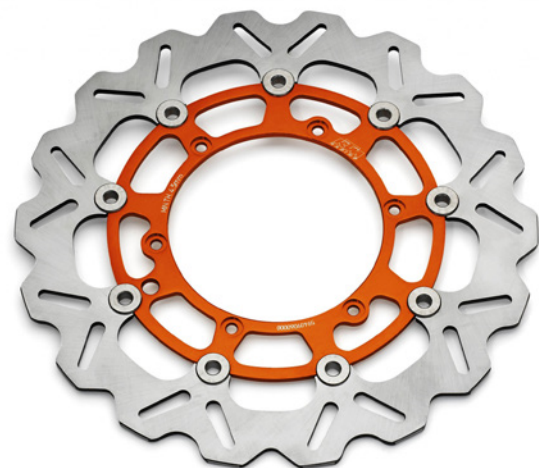
KTM

We've highlighted some of KTM's cool Powerwear garments and protection as well as some of the curios in their cave of accessories in OTOR before but here are a few suggestions to 'Bling' up one of the best selling motorcycle ranges; the Super Duke in 125, 200 and 390 incarnations. The Austrians have pretty much everything. From sticker sets and plastics upgrades to brake discs, seats, power outlet kits, alarm systems, covers, masks and an Akrapovic slip-on silencer.

When you've done buying your personal wear for the Super Duke then start on the machine itself. You can order or pick up the stuff through any KTM dealer and check out the full catalogue for pretty much the whole KTM two-wheeled spectrum here:

http://www.ktm.com/uploads/tx_news2/KTM_PP_Street_MY14_DE_GB.pdf







BACKPAGE

Monster Energy Girls
Ray Archer







'On-track Off-road' is a free, bi-weekly publication for the screen focused on bringing the latest perspectives on events, blogs and some of the very finest photography from the three worlds of the FIM Motocross World Championship, the AMA Motocross and Supercross series' and MotoGP. 'On-track Off-road' will be published online at www.ontrackoffroad.com every other Tuesday. To receive an email notification that a new issue available with a brief description of each edition's contents simply enter an address in the box provided on the homepage. All email addresses will be kept strictly confidential and only used for purposes connected with OTOR.

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